

NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF

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MOVING PATIENTS.—The *Medical Record* in an editorial on this subject says: "At training-schools for nurses the pupils are thoroughly instructed relative to the care of patients, but are taught nothing relative to their transportation and movement. This duty is delegated to the hospital orderlies, and mistakenly regarded as outside the province and beyond the strength of female nurses. As a result, the average female nurse, when thrown on her own resources, is unable to even direct and supervise the movements of patients by others to best advantage. The hospital orderlies, on their part, usually rely upon main strength to take the place of concerted action and a proper disposition of bearers, and, through their lack of intelligent coöperation, may often be almost as much of a hinderance as a help to each other. In the military service, on the other hand, the handling and transportation of patients in the most convenient and comfortable manner is regarded as a matter of the first importance, and the members of the Hospital Corps receive thorough instruction on this point according to fixed methods prescribed in the manual of drill. To see these trained men lifting, moving, and carrying patients with varying numbers of bearers up and down stairs and over obstacles—rapidly, securely, and without injury or discomfort to the patient—is a spectacle calculated to enlighten medical men as to the deficiencies in this respect of the average hospital and ambulance service. No better guide for instruction in this respect can be found than the drill manual for the Army Hospital Corps, which, in regard to the transportation of patients, is not so much a book of military drill as a guide to the most simple and satisfactory methods instinctively employed by the instructed in arriving at a necessary result. There is no question but that it would be of much value if practical instruction in the handling and movement of patients along the lines laid down in this manual were given to the nurses and orderlies in every training-school and hospital."

CONSTIPATION.—Dr. Goodhart has an article on this subject in the *Lancet* which controverts some theories that have been long held by many people. He says: "It is not a fact that if the bowels do not act for several days obstruction will result. The bowels were made for man and not man for his bowels. It is not one of the necessary conditions of life that such and such clearances should be made every twenty-four hours. Very few persons suffering from constipation show any signs of retention. The abdomen is usually retracted and apparently empty; in many cases the constipation is due to insufficient food being taken. The absorption effected by the colon is enormous, the small intestine doing little more than digest the food and prepare it for absorption. An abnormally active colon rejecting very little that is offered to it is a cause of so-called constipation. Much good nutriment is often wasted

by the constant effort to keep the bowels open. Flatulent distention of the intestine seldom of itself causes pain. The combination of flatulence and pain always indicates the necessity for careful physical examination." Dr. Goodhart protests emphatically against the doctrines of self-infection and self-intoxication. He says: "The great feature of our stomachs and intestines is that they call nothing unclean. One must be careful how he accuses of septicity such a great master in natural asepsis as the stomach or the intestine."

THE SO-CALLED HARDENING OF CHILDREN.—Hecker says in one of the foreign exchanges of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* that the cold bathing and sleeping in cold rooms which are applied so vigorously by many families as a means of hardening their children have in reality the opposite effect in many cases. Their physicians are like the fishermen in the fairy-tale who were terrified at the sight of the genii they had invoked. He has been examining thirty-four children brought up on these principles and finds that the systematic hardening process very frequently entails an exaggerated tendency to colds, sore throat, and respiratory affections, also to severe anæmia and general nervous disturbances, neurasthenia, loss of appetite, restless sleep and irritability, with change of character. It may also induce acute and chronic recurring intestinal affections, and aggravate the course of infectious diseases, especially of whooping-cough. He reports a number of cases in detail to sustain these assertions. Infants should be kept warm at all times, he says, but after a child is a year old the hardening measures may be commenced, though very gently and gradually and strictly individualized. No furs should be worn, and the throat should not be wrapped up. During north-east winds, extreme cold, and snowstorms, children should be kept indoors. The windows of rooms where young children sleep should not be kept wide open except in summer and in a mild climate. If the child shrinks from a cold sponge-bath, it should be applied very cautiously, and even pleasure in the bath is not an absolute criterion that it may not have injurious after-effects. Cold sponging is better than cold douches for children, and once a day is enough. Cold water should not be used for children without a preceding medical examination, especially if they are nervous or anæmic.

OZONE IN PERTUSSIS.—According to Louis Delherm in an abstract in the *Monthly Encyclopædia of Practical Medicine*, ozone is a specific in whooping-cough and exerts a strong antispasmodic action during the stage of whooping. Given in inhalations of ten minutes three or four times a day, it causes marked diminution in the number of paroxysms and seems to prevent recurrence. It decreases cyanosis and seems to aid in the amelioration of a complicating pneumonia. The time between paroxysms is frequently lengthened and the cough is attenuated in intensity, violence, and duration. The treatment should be kept up two weeks at least, and it is perfectly harmless.

INFANT FEEDING.—Edward T. Abrams says in the *Medical News*: "The indications for the variation of sugar, fats, and proteids in infant feeding are as follows: 1. If the bowel movements are curdy, we may take it as an indication of an excess of proteids. 2. Sour vomiting indicates too much fat. 3. Stools that are very watery but without curds may depend on too much sugar or too much fat. 4. Vomiting of hard, curdy masses may indicate too much

proteids. 5. Should the child seem to do well on the mixture in every way except that it does not gain in weight, then the sugar may be too low. 6. Vomiting may mean that the child has eaten too much. These rules are not absolute, but they are sufficiently correct for a guide. He sums up by concluding that:

"1. Breast milk is the best infant food.

"2. That no artificial food can or should be trusted which does not contain the essentials of breast milk—viz., fat, proteids, and sugar.

"3. That the elements named are to be found only in milk, cow's milk being the only one available for general use.

"4. That cow's milk must be modified because it does not contain the same proportions of the elements named."

THE case of the late Hon. Thomas B. Reed, who is understood to have died of uræmia, furnishes an exceptional example, we should say, of exemption from much of the suffering, often recurrent and long continued, that is apt to precede the fatal issue of Bright's disease. Although a practised eye would long ago have suspected from Mr. Reed's appearance that he was the subject of a renal affection, he was able to continue his professional work without interruption up to within a very few days of his death.—*New York Medical Journal*.

CHLOROFORM IN EARACHE.—The *Courier of Medicine* says: "A simple, harmless, and infallible cure for earache is effected by making a small funnel of stiff writing-paper and saturating a ball of cotton the size of a hickory-nut with chloroform; drop it into the funnel; place the small end of the funnel into the ear, draw a long breath, and then blow the breath into the large end of the funnel; the fumes of the chloroform are thus carried into the ear and all pain ceases at once."

IMPROVED WRITING-APPARATUS FOR THE BLIND.—The *Journal of the American Medical Association*, quoting from *Bulletin de l'Academie de Medicin*, Paris, says: "The small portable apparatus invented by Dussaud writes the alphabet from left to right and on the side of the paper on which it is to be read, thus obviating the necessity of turning the paper over. Instead of a punch, the writing is done with a small frame containing six keys, like those of a typewriter, which allow all the combinations possible of the alphabet used by the blind and raise the letters in relief."

FORMALIN IN HYPERIDROSIS.—The *Philadelphia Medical Journal*, quoting from a foreign exchange, says: "In sweating of the feet formaldehyde possesses all the advantages of chromic acid without its disadvantages. A single application of either strong or diluted formaldehyde by means of a brush will bring about permanent relief. It is also well to sprinkle some formalin on the inner side of the soles of the shoes. For the ill-smelling perspiration of the axilla the author recommends washing with water containing ten to fourteen drops of formalin to the glass."

